

In the Claims

1-13 (canceled).

14. (currently amended) The combination of claim ~~13~~ 41, wherein the disk has a substantially flat upper surface.

15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended) The combination of claim ~~13~~ 41, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out.

17 through 22 (canceled).

23. (currently amended) The combination of claim ~~41~~ 22, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth..

24 through 37 (canceled).

38. (currently amended) The combination of claim ~~41~~ 13, wherein the thermal preservation fluid is inaccessible.

39. (previously presented) The combination of claim 14, wherein the thermal

preservation fluid is inaccessible.

40. (canceled)

41. (currently amended) A combination of a thermal preservation insert and a plastic food container, comprising:

a plastic food container including a bottom with a periphery and a container wall, said container wall having a tapered lower portion with an inner surface that meets the periphery of the bottom, the inner surface having a shape, the tapered lowered portion being tapered around its entire inner surface,

a thermal preservation insert comprising:

a disk, the disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms identically to the periphery of a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container, and having a tapered side that conforms identically to the a shape of the inner surface of the lower portion of the container wall of the plastic food container, the lower surface of the disk resting on the bottom of the plastic food container and the side of the disk resting snugly against the lower portion of the container wall, said disk not fastened to a part of the plastic container.

42. (canceled)

43. (currently amended) A method of preparing a plastic food container so that it can

store food in a thermally controlled way, comprising:

(a) providing a plastic food container, said plastic food container including a bottom with a periphery and a container wall, said plastic food container wall having a tapered lower portion with an inner surface that meets the periphery of the bottom, the inner surface having a shape, the tapered lowered portion being tapered around its entire inner surface,

(b) providing a thermal preservation insert, the insert comprising:

a disk, the disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk, the disk having a lower surface that conforms identically to the periphery of a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container, and having a tapered side that conforms identically to the shape of the inner surface of the lower portion of the container wall of the plastic food container

(c) placing the thermal preservation insert inside the plastic food container so that the lower surface of the disk rests on the bottom of the plastic food container, so that the side of the disk rests snugly against the lower portion of the container wall and so that the disk is not fastened to a part of the plastic food container.